

Effective Communication: Conflict Resolution

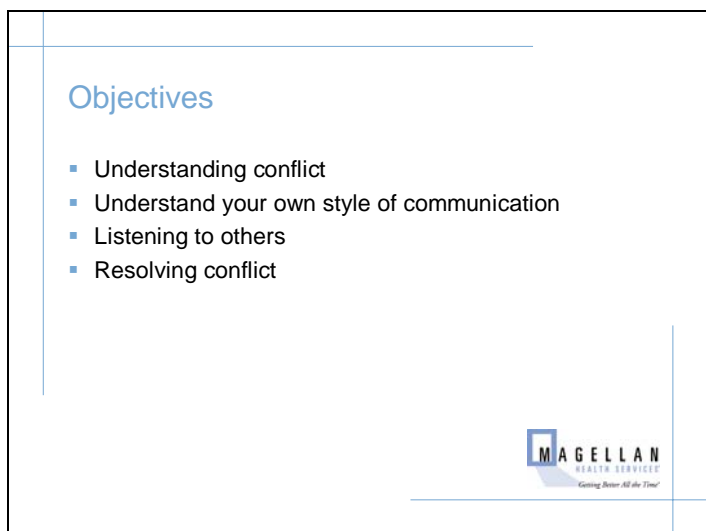
Note Taking Handout



**Effective Communication:
Conflict Resolution**

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Objectives

- Understanding conflict
- Understand your own style of communication
- Listening to others
- Resolving conflict

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What Is Conflict?

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Understanding The Nature Of Conflict

- Competition
- Interdependence
- Perceived incompatibility



Factors Affecting Conflict

- Nature of an issue
- Size of the conflict
- Situation and environment
- Individual personalities, traits, and dispositions
- Cultural influences



Recognizing Your Communication Style



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Effective Communication: Keys To Building Relationships

- Creating win/wins
- Coping with change
- Juggling work/life
- Managing time
- Creating a positive work environment, teamwork
- Managing workplace conflict, diversity
- Meeting customer needs



Communicating:

Listening:

- Process of becoming aware
- Provides information needed
- Reduces impact



Six Levels Of Listening

- Passive listening
- Responsive listening
- Selective listening
- Attentive listening
- Active listening
- Empathic listening



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Obstacles That Prevent Effective Listening

- Internal Errors
- External Errors
- Response Errors



Internal Errors

- Internal preoccupation
- Self-involvement
- Selective attention
- Listening with an agenda



External Errors

- External distraction
- Communicator style
- Preconceptions
- Constituencies



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Response Error

- Discount
- Advise
- Derail
- Analyze



How To Listen

- Attend to both content and emotion
- Suspend judgment and analysis
- Convey understanding of the explicit and implicit messages
- Remain sensitive to signs of resistance and defensiveness



Avoiding Conflicts Results In

- Resentments build up
- Feelings get displaced onto other people or things
- Gripping, backbiting



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Mutual Conflict Resolution

- Identify purpose, importance, desire to solve
- Take turns listening
- Repeat what was said
- Clarify questions
- Find agreement areas
- List all solutions
- Star mutually acceptable solutions
- Choose one
- Set next steps and time to evaluate



Guidelines For Conflict Resolution

- Address early and in private
- Speak directly to person with whom you have conflict
- Expect discomfort
- Focus on desired outcome, not problem
- Stick to the topic
- Treat other person as resource
- Call a time-out
- Take the other person's skill level into consideration



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Thank You for Attending this training!



Effective Communication: Conflict Resolution

Participant Handouts

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Active Listening Pointers

- Give your **undivided attention**. Put down your paper or telephone, turn off the TV and look at your co-worker, partner, or child.
- Pay attention to the **non-verbal messages** of body language and tone. This will tell you what the other person needs or wants from you. It will also tell you when “yes I can get that report for you” really means “not in a millions years will I get that report for you.”
- **Listen** more than you talk. Substitute listening for lecturing and rescuing (i.e., solving problems) when all they want is a sympathetic ear.
- **Use eye contact and body language** (e.g., open body position, face the speaker, nod, and smile [where appropriate]). This tells people you are listening to them and that what they say is important.
- **Mirror** their body language with yours. Lean forward a little when they lean forward. While you do not want to mimic people, people who are on the same wave length mirror each other's body language.
- **Let people finish their thoughts.**
- Stay **calm and neutral**.
- **Check your baggage** at the door: be sensitive to your preconceived notions and “buttons” that trigger a negative emotional response.
- Encourage **open-ended conversation** by using probing with phrases or questions such as “tell me about” or “what do you think about...?”.
- **Use supportive phrases or sounds** such as “uh-huh”, “I see”, “you don’t say”, “sure”, “okay”, “gotcha”, etc. These encourage the other person to speak and show that you are listening.
- **Paraphrase words and feelings** to make sure you have heard the message and to show empathy. For example: “You sound really angry about that.” “Sounds like you’ve just about had it.” “If I understand correctly, what you’d like me to do is ...”
- **Ask people to paraphrase for you.** Find a polite way of ensuring that people have understood you. “Could you summarize what we’ve discussed to make sure we are on the same page?” “Could you review the major deliverables to make sure that I’m going in the right direction?” This is also a very useful technique with children in addition to in the workplace.
- Avoid **“you” messages**, especially negative, absolute “you” messages. For example, avoid saying “you never take out the garbage.” Substitute “I” messages and deal only with the current situation. For example, “I feel frustrated when you don’t take out the garbage.” Share your feelings or perspective without “dumping” on the other person.
- **Put it in writing.** Verbal reminders can evolve into nagging so easily. Without saying a word you can communicate anything you need said. Leave humorous notes or emails for your partner. Notes are also a great way of saying “I love you”. At work, email can be a great way of following up on tasks you have discussed with a co-worker.

- **Use these eight words and phrases with your spouse/partner or child at least once a day:**

Thank you.

Tell me more.

You can do it.

How can I help?

How about a hug?

Please.

Good job. Good for you.

I love you.

- **Smile.** Smile more often than you frown. Try to speak to co-workers, customers, or your partner in a pleasant tone of voice instead of an angry one. Lightening up and using humor can work wonders.
- **Legs first, mouth second.** Instead of hollering downstairs into the basement, or into the next office, walk into the room where your spouse or co-worker is working before addressing them.
- **Mind your P's and Q's.** Speak to other people in the way you want them to speak to you.
- **Get on their radar screen first.** When you have something important to say to somebody, make sure you have connected first (eye contact, address them by name, have their attention) before you share your important message.

How to Develop Your Forceful Communication Style¹

The Person With The More Tentative Style Can:

- When someone speaks to you in a harsh tone, ask that person to practice “active listening.”
- Imagine yourself as the more forceful person in a confrontation.
- Ask yourself, “What is the worst thing that this person could say to me?” Then imagine yourself saying this to them.
- Acknowledge to yourself that this other person needs your input. You very likely have information to share that they might not have.

The Person With The More Forceful Style Can:

- Start more sentences with, “How would it feel to you if?” Or “How about if we?”
- As soon as you have stated your desire or opinion, ask “and how does that seem to you?”
- Practice negotiation before coming to your own firm decision.
- Recognize that the other person might need to be asked their opinion. Allow room for a dialogue rather than a monologue.

¹ Adapted from the work of Susan Campbell, Ph.D.

Mutual Conflict Resolution Steps and Guidelines

Mutual Conflict Resolution Steps

1. Identify together with the other person the purpose of the conversation, the importance of the problem, and your desire to solve it.
2. Take turns listening.
3. Repeat what the other person said.
4. Ask clarifying questions.
5. Find something to agree with them about.
6. List all solutions.
7. Star those solutions that are mutually acceptable.
8. Choose one.
9. Set next steps and a time to evaluate.

Guidelines for Conflict Resolution

- Address early and in private.
- Speak directly to the person with whom you have the conflict.
- Expect discomfort! This is not easy to do, but it's easier than the pain of not addressing the conflict.
- Focus on the desired outcome, not the problem.
- Stick to the topic. Don't cart out forty years worth of grievances.
- Treat the other person as a resource.
- Call a time-out (not a cop out).
- Take the other person's skills level into consideration and cut your losses if it is not working. Agree to disagree. It still can be beneficial to get things out in the open, even if you do not have a perfect solution.

How to Win Over a Difficult or Angry Person

1. Plan to be calm.
2. Zip your lip. Let them say what's on their mind.
3. Express empathy and, if appropriate, say you are sorry.
4. Speak and listen non-defensively. Don't take it personally.
5. Check out what they have said, paraphrase, to make sure that you have accurately captured the content and the feelings.
6. Begin active problem solving.
7. Mutually agree on the solution.
8. Follow up. This is crucial.

Self Assessment Quiz

Respond to the following statements with true or false:

I smile frequently when talking to others.

I make eye contact when listening.

I use “open” body language when listening to people.

I use encouraging words and phrases (e.g., uh-huh, I see).

I listen intentionally.

I try to put myself in the other person’s shoes.

I am aware of my buttons and triggers.

I usually keep my mind from wandering when other people talk to me.

I make eye contact when listening.

I let other people finish what they are saying before I talk.

I summarize what I think I am hearing.

I listen for the real message and the feelings behind words.

I ask questions to probe and clarify my understanding.

I listen to only one person at a time.

When I am listening to people, I do only that (e.g., don’t read files on my desk or answer the telephone).

I hold off giving advice and find out what the speaker needs from me.

I let the speaker finish his or her sentence.

I treat all people as interesting.

I listen more than I talk.

Additional Resources

Books:

Burley-Allen, Madelyn. *Listening: The Forgotten Skill*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.

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Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*. Avon Books, New York, 1991.

Hopson, Dr. Barrie and Mike Scally. *Communication Skills to Inspire Confidence*. Pfeiffer & Company, San Diego, 1993.

Robertson, Arthur K. *The Language of Effective Listening*, 1991.

Tannen, Deborah, Ph.D. *You Just Don't Understand*. Ballantine Books, New York, 1990.

Websites:

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www.stress.org: American Institute of Stress, Yonkers, NY.

www.onlinepsych.com: Online Psych

www.shpm.com: Self-Help and Psychology Magazine

www.cmhc.com/selfhelp/: Self-Help Sourcebook OnLine